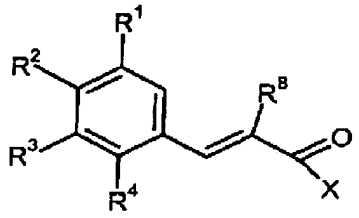
IN THE CLAIMS:

1 - 9 (Cancelled)

10. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a compound of formula (III)



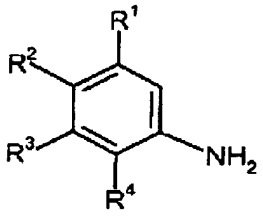
(III),

wherein R^1, R^2, R^3 and R^4 are identical or different and in each case represent hydrogen, fluorine, chlorine or bromine, at least two of these radicals being other than hydrogen and

X represents OR^5 or $N(R^6)(R^7)$, where R^5 represents hydrogen or optionally substituted C_1-C_{10}-alkyl, optionally substituted phenyl or benzyl and R^6 and R^7 are identical or different and in each case represent optionally substituted C_1-C_{10}-alkyl and

R^8 represents hydrogen, chlorine, bromine or optionally substituted C_1-C_{10}-alkyl,

the process comprising: reacting (1) an aniline of the formula (VI)



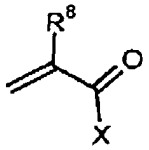
(IV),

wherein

R^1, R^2, R^3 and R^4 have the meaning indicated in formula (III)

with sodium nitrite in aqueous sulfuric acid or with methyl, ethyl, butyl or amyl nitrite sulfuric acid-containing methanol into a diazonium salt and reacting (2) the resulting reaction mixture

with a compound of formula (V)



(V),

wherein

X has the meaning indicated in formula (III) and

R^8 represents hydrogen, chlorine, bromine or optionally substituted C_1-C_{10}-alkyl,

in the presence of a homogeneous, palladium-containing catalyst at a temperature ranging from about -5 to about +100°C.

11. (Currently Amended) The process according to Claim 10, wherein

R^1 represents hydrogen or chlorine,

R^2 represents hydrogen, fluorine, chlorine or bromine,

R^3 represents hydrogen or chlorine and

R^4 represents fluorine or chlorine, at least one of the radicals R^1, R^2 and R^3 being other than hydrogen,

R^5 represents hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, isopropyl or benzyl,

R^6 and R^7 represent methyl or ethyl, and

R^8 represents hydrogen or methyl ~~and represents an equivalent of chloride, hydrogensulfate or acetate or $_{1/2}$ an equivalent of sulfate~~.

12. (Currently Amended) The process according to Claim [[11]]10, wherein, the palladium-containing catalyst is selected from the group consisting of

$PdCl_2$, $PdBr_2$, $Pd(NO_3)_2$, H_2PdCl_4, $Pd(CH_3COO)_2$, Na_2PdCl_4, K_2PdCl_4, Pd(II) acetylacetonate, tetra-(trisphenylphosphine)Pd , tris-(dibenzylidene-acetone)Pd_2 and wherein the palladium-containing catalyst is used in an amount ranging from about 0.001 to about 10 mol%, based on the diazonium salt of the formula (IV).

13. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 10, wherein from about 0.5 to about 2 moles of compounds of formula (V) are employed, per mole of diazonium salt of the formula (IV).

14. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 10, wherein the process is carried out without a base.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (New) The process according to Claim 10, wherein,

R^1, R^2, R^3, R^4, R^8 has the meaning indicated in formula (III) and

X represents OR^5, where R^5 represents hydrogen.